

There is attached a procedure to be followed in any accident involving a Government-owned vehicle driven by any individual of the Coordinator of Information. Any accident that may occur, however minor, must be reported in accordance with this procedure.

A copy of this procedure, along with Standard Forms 26, 27, and 28 shall be placed in each automotive unit under the jurisdiction of the Coordinator of Information and shall not be removed from that vehicle except, of course, when necessary in making an accident report.

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I. CLAIMS (GENERAL)

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- A. There shall be designated one person and an alternate to each office of the C.O.I. to handle accident claims. For Washington the investigating officer will be the head of the Motor Transportation Pool who shall act as an investigating officer in all action involving Government owned equipment. [] will act as alternate. This procedure will enable the individual to familiarize himself with the procedure, thereby producing more satisfactory results.
- B. No commitments shall be made to anyone concerning the disposition which will be made of a claim; final decision in such matters is reserved for the Administrative Officer. No settlements of any nature are to be made without authority from the Administrative Officer; nor can any office make a compromise settlement of a claim.
- C. The making of the report should not be delayed, as it is often necessary to reply to numerous inquiries sent direct to the Budget and Finance Office in regard to each particular case.
- D. When it is believed advisable to enter a claim against a private individual seeking reimbursement for damages to Government property, full information concerning the financial status of the private person involved should be submitted so that it may be determined how best to obtain satisfaction of the claim.
- E. Copies of all correspondence between the claimant and the office are to be sent to the Budget and Finance Division in the same number of copies as the original report when submitted, which will be attached to and made a part of the report. No individual of the C.O.I. may address letters to members of Congress or other public officials making claims without prior Administrative approval.

II. CLAIMS FOR LOSS OF OR DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

- A. Loss of, or damage to private property sustained by civilians, allegedly arising through the negligence of a Government agent, is adjusted under the Act of December 28, 1922.

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* Following is an epitome of the "Small Claims" Act of December 28, 1922:

- (1) Claim for loss of, or damage to private property may be certified to Congress in order that an appropriation be made for reimbursement, provided:
 - (a) The sum claimed does not exceed \$1,000.
 - (b) The claim is presented within one year from the date of its accrual for damage to, or loss of privately-owned property. Furthermore, the damage or loss for which the claim is to be made must have resulted from the negligence of an employee of the Coordinator of Information while acting within the scope of his employment.
 - (c) The acceptance by any claimant of the amount determined under the provisions of this Act shall be deemed to be in full settlement of such claim against the Government of the United States.

8 No provision was made under the Act of December 28, 1922, for the consideration of personal injury claims arising from the negligence of a Government agent or agency. When no claim is filed for property damage, a claim being made for personal injuries only, shall be submitted to the [redacted] with complete reports and all pertinent papers properly prepared, which will serve to present the true facts. These reports are needed in the event a private bill should be introduced in Congress for the relief of any person, or persons, injured.

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III. RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYEES

- A. Government employees may be held personally responsible for injuries to private individuals arising from their negligence, either as the result of an automobile accident, or any other accident.
- B. No employees of the C.O.I. have the right or power to compel another employee to settle with private individuals.

IV. CLAIMS FOR LOSS OF OR DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY, RESULTING FROM AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT.

- A. Whenever an accident occurs involving a Government agency, or agency coming within the scope of the C.O.I., resulting in the loss of, or damage to private property, a complete record shall be submitted as promptly as possible

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to the [redacted] ~~The report should be submitted in triplicate. The original and two complete copies are to be transmitted to this office of all pertinent papers. One complete copy shall be retained in the originating field office files.~~ STATINTL

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B. The following papers must be submitted to the [redacted]

- (1) Standard Form No. 26, "Report of Driver of Government Vehicle" (diagram on reverse side to be completed). This form is to be filled out at the scene of the accident by the driver in his own handwriting. Copies may be typed.
- (2) Standard Form No. 27, "Report of Investigating Officer" (diagram on reverse to be completed). Black ink shall be used to indicate the position of the colliding vehicle before and at the point of impact. Red ink to indicate the relative position just after the collision.
- (3) Standard Form 28, Claim form provided for an individual suffering loss or damage, in the event he wishes to submit a claim as a result of an automobile accident. (If Form 28 is not submitted, Forms 26 and 27 and supplemental reports, will be placed in the closed claims file where they will remain until such time as the case may be reopened by the presentation of a claim. If a private individual does not desire to file a claim for damages sustained in an accident, a notarized statement should be obtained, in which there is a declaration made that no claim will be filed and that the Government is released of responsibility.
- (4) Narrative Report of Investigating Officer, setting forth all pertinent facts. Original must be manually signed.
- (5) Narrative Report of Driver of Government Vehicle. (Original to be manually signed. Copies may be typed.)
- (6) Statements procured from any and all eyewitnesses. Originals should be in the individual's own hand-writing preferably, and must be signed. Copies may be typed.
- (7) If a report is made by a police officer, there shall be submitted an authenticated copy of his report.

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- (8) If possible three estimates of the repairs necessary to place the private-owned vehicle in the same condition existing prior to the accident. If such repairs have been made the receipted bill should be forwarded. If badly depreciated parts of a private owned vehicle are replaced with new parts, this fact should be reported.
 - (9) When animals such as dogs, cows, or horses have been killed, evaluations of three disinterested persons are to be obtained if possible. If the animal was injured and not killed, three statements from persons who are in a position to testify as to its value prior to and after its injury must be included in the report.
- C. The Investigating Officer on Standard Form 27, "Investigating Officer's Report", should include the following:
- (1) The cost of repairs to each vehicle in addition to the itemization of the damages.
 - (2) The employment status of Government driver involved in automobile accidents on the line marked, "Title and Station."
 - (3) Line 2, Block captioned "Official Duty", should show whether or not the driver of the Government vehicle possessed a Government operator's permit at the time he was involved in the accident. If the driver of the Government vehicle did not possess a permit at the time of the accident, a certification from the responsible officer must be submitted, setting forth why the employee was permitted to operate a government vehicle without such a permit.
- D. The driver of the Government vehicle and the Investigating Officer, in preparing their narrative reports, should dwell upon the following facts:
- (1) Time of Accident
 - (2) Weather, roadway conditions, whether light or dark, width of roadway, location of each vehicle with respect to roadway at point of collision, as well as positions of vehicles after collision.
 - (3) Estimated speed of both vehicles prior to and at the time of the contact.
 - (4) Location of stationary or moving objects which may have influenced the progress of the vehicle.

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- (5) Signals given and effort made by either operator to avert accident by:
 - (a) Braking
 - (b) Stopping
 - (c) Driving off road surface
 - (6) Whether or not faulty equipment of either vehicle was responsible for the accident. In event that defects in material or workmanship were the cause of the accident, the report should contain a statement as to the exact time the last inspection of the equipment was made, and an explanation as to the thoroughness. There should also be made as a part of the report a copy of the last inspection report signed by the mechanic and responsible officer.
 - (7) When an accident involves a collision with an animal, the driver should state at what distance the presence of the animal was detected. If the horse, or animal, appeared to be nervous and excited at the vehicle approaching, the driver should state from what distance this fright was apparent.
 - (8) A definite commitment should be obtained from the civilian owner of a damaged vehicle as to whether or not the damage is covered, in whole, or in part, by insurance.
 - (9) Whether or not the driver of the Government vehicle is protected by insurance coverage. If so, give policy number and type of coverage. If adjustment is to be made under the terms of the policy, information to that effect shall be reported.
- E. The investigating officer should set out, in addition, the following:
- (1) Time of arrival at scene of accident
 - (2) Evidence of tire marks or tracks that disclosed course of vehicle prior to and after the accident. (Measurements if possible)
 - (3) Exact description of damages to both vehicles and estimated cost of repairs to each. In case of Government vehicle an itemized statement including both parts and labor signed by the mechanic and officer must be attached.

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- (4) A description of the private vehicle damaged, giving the make, model and year manufactured; three estimates, if possible, of the used car value of a like machine.
- (5) Statement regarding disciplinary action, if any, taken against Government driver.

V. AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS FOR WHICH A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL IS RESPONSIBLE, INVOLVING LOSS OF OR DAMAGE TO GOVERNMENT OWNED PROPERTY.

- A. Reports are to be submitted following the procedure as set out in previous paragraphs with the exception that Claim Form No. 28 is not submitted.
- B. If necessary repairs to place Government vehicle in same condition existing prior to accident have been made, the number of the purchase order by which the parts were procured shall be reported.
- C. If repairs were not made, an affidavit giving the necessary repairs and the cost thereof, shall be forwarded.
- D. If Government property is damaged, for which negligence attaches to a private individual, an attempt should be made to have the vehicle repaired at a local garage after obtaining commitment from private party that he was at fault and that the expense of repairs will be borne by him. An affidavit should be executed by the private individual absolving the Government of all responsibility.
- E. No officer has authority to give a formal release in the event of satisfaction of the Government's claim against a private individual. It is permissible to make acknowledgment of repairs made to a Government vehicle. This does not alleviate the necessity of first reporting the accident, however, in accordance with previous instructions.

VI. CAPTION TO BE USED ON AUTOMOTIVE ACCIDENT REPORTS.

- A. A caption should be used in each letter setting out the following information:
 - (1) Date of the accident
 - (2) Name of the individual operating Government vehicle followed by the designation, "Government Driver."

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- (3) Whether the Government vehicle involved is the property of the Government
 - (4) Name of the location to which Government vehicle is attached.
 - (5) Name of the owner of the private vehicle, if one is involved, followed by the designation, "Private Individual."
- B. The caption of your letters of transmittal and all other correspondence should therefore read as follows:

RE: Accident, November 1, 1947
John Doe, Gov't. Driver
C.O.I. Vehicle
Stillwater, Oklahoma
Richard Roe, Private Individual
(If one is involved).

VII. MANNER IN WHICH AUTOMOTIVE ACCIDENT REPORTS ARE TO BE FILED AND ASSEMBLED FOR TRANSMITTAL

- A. Use caption on folders as indicated under Paragraph VI.
- B. Accident reports shall be arranged and transmitted in the following manner:

(Starting from the bottom)

1. Standard Form 26 - Government Driver's Report
2. Standard Form 27 - Investigating Officer's Report
3. Attachments to support Form 27:
 - (a) Estimated Damages to Government vehicle
 - (b) Receipts or statements of Doctor for injuries sustained by Government Driver
 - (c) Estimated damages to Private vehicle
 - (d) Receipts or statements of Doctor for injuries sustained by Private Individual.
4. Photographs
5. Investigating Officer's Narrative Report
6. Police Officer's Report

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7. Government Driver's Narrative Report
8. Private Individual's Narrative Report or signed statement
9. Statements of Witnesses
10. Form 28 - Claim for Damages
11. Papers supporting Claimant's Claim for Damages - Form 28.
12. Correspondence; filed in date order, most recent date on top.

VIII. ACCIDENTS INVOLVING HIT-AND-RUN DRIVERS

- A. Occasion may arise wherein Government employees on official business become involved in an accident with an unidentified hit-and-run driver. In those cases Government employees will obtain, if possible, an accurate description of the unidentified car and its occupants. Immediately after the accident police authorities in surrounding communities should be notified and requested to maintain a lookout for the unidentified hit-and-run driver.